

The Republican.

No. 26, VOL. 9.] LONDON, Friday, June 25, 1824. [PRICE 6d.

TRIAL OF THOMAS JEFFERIES,

For publishing Paine's "Age of Reason," before Newman Knowlys, the Recorder, and a common Jury, being the same which gave the verdict of "Guilty," against William Campion, at the Old Bailey, New Court, June 8.

Mr. Barnard opened the pleadings, and Mr. Bolland stated the case.

The publication was proved, and the defendant's Counsel (Mr. French) was going to cross examine the witness; but the defendant, from the bar, told him he did not wish to have him asked any questions as he was willing to admit the publication.

The case here closed for the prosecution.

Mr. French then rose to address the Jury on behalf of the defendant, he said, that it was only within the last few hours he received a brief, or the least instruction to act for the defendant—he was afraid too late to answer his expectations; and in considering the critical situation in which his unfortunate client stood, he deeply regretted that his notice had been so short, being thereby prevented from giving the case that solemn attention and deep study which its great importance required: he should, however under all those disadvantages, say a few words for his client. God forbid that he should, in his professional character, stand by and allow the liberty of the subject to be trifled with.

He described the defendant as a young man whose principles had been early subverted by his becoming associated with Unitarians. He entered one of their schools, and sucked in the poison which had eradicated that belief which he formerly had in the Divinity of Christ. There was a time when this was truly a Christian country; but now the laws were altered, and the denial of the divinity of Christ

was permitted in the Unitarian Chapels, and many were there now holding high rank in the Bar and in the Senate—aye, and in the Church too, who denied the Trinity. Why were not the rich—the affluent attacked for propagating anti-Christian doctrines? The Unitarian was the real blasphemer, and yet he escaped prosecution. What was there, as the law now stood, he asked, to prevent a Jury of twelve Unitarians from trying the defendant?—Nothing. What was the state of the law, when twelve Blasphemers could be put in that box to try one Blasphemer? Was it not well known that, by the present laws of the country—and he defied the Learned Judge on the Bench to deny it—twelve Unitarians (he might say twelve blasphemers) could sit in that box and try another blasphemer—even try the very person at the bar, who had been when young seduced from religion, and made to imbibe their own vile doctrines? It was to this that might be attributed the situation in which his client now stood, he having learned at their place of worship to consider Christ but a man, and not a God. Was this not blasphemy—the grossest of blasphemy? And still they were not prosecuted, but tolerated. He knew there were men of great eminence at the bar who professed these doctrines, and were Unitarians.—Nay, there were men in the very seat of Government, who professed them. Why were they not prosecuted? was it because one man was poor and the other rich and high in station, that he was to be screened? Was this justice? Nothing but respect to the learned Judge on the Bench, and not through any delicacy towards them, that made him refrain from giving their names. There were the blasphemous writings of Lord Byron, which were accompanied with all the blandishments that his fine genius could bestow; these works were spread widely throughout the kingdom; but still neither the Noble Lord, in his life time, nor the publishers of his works, were ever prosecuted, so that the title of Noble Lord carried with it its own protection; but the poor ignorant man, who had been misled by one set of blasphemers, is brought to the bar to stand his trial for blasphemy. He would ask, were there ever a rich man, or a man in power, brought to the bar of the Old Bailey for blasphemy? He would say that those men in power, who professed the doctrines of the Unitarians, deserved to be brought to that bar for blasphemy, as well as the poor man who then stood at it. Why was the poor unprotected defendant laid hold of by the Solicitor of the Treasury, Mr. Maule, and men of influence in the

country, suffered to blaspheme with impunity without any attempt being made to bring them to trial? For his part, he thought it was a mockery of justice to pick out a poor fellow like the defendant, when higher game presented itself to the view of the prosecutors. Why did not the prosecutors go into the Unitarian Chapels, where they might hear the arch blasphemers declaiming against the Christian religion, though they called themselves Christian ministers: which hypocrisy was as disgusting as the opinions they held. The law had been changed in this country, for it was well known there was a time in England when no one would have dared to openly deny the divinity of Christ. The law had, as he had said, been altered, and instead of Christianity being now generally believed throughout the land, it was permitted to be openly promulgated that Christ was not God. The propagators of this doctrine, which had eradicated from the mind of the defendant at the bar, his belief in the divinity of Christ, were the insidious Unitarians, and so long as the law tolerated Unitarianism, it was scandalous and unjust for men like his client to be prosecuted for promulgating their opinions. He called upon the Jury, who as Christians, would think it very intolerant if they should be assailed by any power, and punished, for giving currency to their opinions, not to do that to others which they would not like to be done unto themselves. The Christian Religion was founded on too firm a basis to require prosecution to uphold it, and he trusted the Jury would not sanction the proceedings against the defendant, but with true Christian feelings say, we will not persecute our brother; if his opinions are erroneous he is answerable to his Creator, we will, therefore, pronounce him Not Guilty.

The Recorder summed up, as in the former case, and the Jury found the defendant Guilty. He was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, and to find sureties to keep the peace for life, in the sum of one hundred pounds, and to be confined till the recognizance was entered into.

The Recorder told the defendant that a second offence rendered him liable to the forfeiture of the recognizance, which would become a debt to the crown, and he would be subject to banishment; and if he returned to this country before the term expired, he would be subject to transportation for fourteen years.

John Christopher then pleaded to three different indictments.

Mr. Phillips, for the defendant, said that he should claim

a new Jury, as the present one had already given an opinion upon the work for which the defendant stood indicted.

The Recorder did not see the force of the objection; the publication would have to be proved, and the Jury were bound to receive the law from him.

Mr. Phillips claimed a fresh Jury as a matter of right.

Recorder: Do the officers of the crown accede to your application?

Mr. Bolland said they did not object to it.

Mr. Phillips then went to his client, and conversed with him for some time; and then informed the Court that the defendant wished to withdraw his plea of Not Guilty, and plead Guilty to the indictment against him.

Recorder: Do the officers of the Crown object to that course?

Mr. Bolland: No, my Lord.

The defendant then pleaded Guilty, and the Court said he had acted wisely, and sentenced him to two months' imprisonment on each indictment, and to find sureties in the sum of £100., to keep the peace for the term of his natural life.

NOTE ON JOHN CHRISTOPHER'S PLEA OF "GUILTY," BY R. CARLILE.

It was a matter of regret to me, that any one should have voluntarily entered my shop with a certainty of prosecution, and then have gone into Court to plead *Guilty*. I was surprised on hearing it; though neither of the men who did so had ever read any of my publications before they entered the shop; and, consequently, they must have entered under some other impressions than those which have actuated every other man who has hitherto connected himself with me. Michael John O'Conner, the reputed thief, was one of them; and I verily think, that he was sent to the shop by the enemy, with a hope of disgracing us. His whole conduct warrants the conclusion. It was he who seduced Hassell to sell the *Age of Reason* to the Police Officer; for Hassell's instructions from me were to reserve himself, until I could get some steady hand in the directing part of the business, or until we had a supply of country friends ready to come forward. He was altogether seduced into the sale of the book, as he had refused many applications of the kind on

two former days. As soon as O'Conner got to the Compter, he said, that he would see Carlile damned before he would suffer two year's imprisonment for him, and immediately stated his determination to recant, as he called it; saying, that Humphreys, the Solicitor to the fraternity of thieves in London, had assured him, that he would be let off on his own recognizances, if he would so recant. The fellow was cunning enough to try how this recanting scheme would act upon me, by saying, that he would go back to the shop instantly, and, by his experience, baffle all further efforts to arrest him. I answered him, that he must give me a very good account of himself, before I should recognize him as a friend of mine, or a fellow advocate of my principles. This baffled the gentleman. He accounted for the charge of theft, by saying that he was employed to keep the accounts of a Mrs. Acocks in Newgate Street: that, on taking some money for her, he lost a sovereign, and, by the aid of pawning his watch, could not make it up by two shillings; and that, because he could not so make it up, Mrs. Acocks gave him in charge, but never appeared at the Justice room to support it. He states himself to have lately returned from the East Indies with General Rumley; to have married; to have a wife and mother to maintain; and only to be nineteen years of age! I was glad to see Mr. Wontner, the Newgate Keeper, come forward to speak of O'Conner's *religious demeanour* in chapel, for the men who are with him, one and all, say, *that he is a disagreeable blackguard, full of every thing foul, and altogether a disgrace to them.* The manner in which he first pleaded guilty to all his indictments, then guilty to one, and not guilty to another, and then acquitted, is a clear proof to me, that he has been either an agent or tampered with since his confinement by the prosecutors. They may set him at large; for not a farthing more shall he get through me, as subscription money or any other kind of support. I am sorry that I was so mis-informed, as to connect William Haley with him as an associate. I have been corrected, and now state as a correction, that Haley had no previous knowledge of him, before meeting him in the shop. O'Conner was suspected, and positively refused employment, nor did he ever stand behind the counter. Haley is a young man of superior abilities, and promises to consolidate them to some good purpose before he leaves Newgate.

The other, who pleaded Guilty, John Christopher, was seduced into it by an Attorney and Barrister, Charles Phil-

lips. A certain Attorney, I scarcely know whether I ought or ought not to give his name, introduced himself to Champion on his arrest, as being deputed by a party of gentlemen in the city, to offer him counsel at their expense, if he would accept it. Champion thankfully declined the offer. The attorney, however, continued to interest himself in the subsequent arrests, and promised John Christopher, that he would write a defence for him, by the Saturday before the trials were to come on. He failed in this promise; and then excused himself by saying, that he would fee Charles Phillips to defend him. This was done; but how! the reader will have seen. Christopher was pressed by both Barrister and Attorney to withdraw his plea of Not Guilty, and to plead Guilty, when his turn came for trial. The plea on their part was, that a diminution of imprisonment would be the consequence. He hesitated and desired time and consultation, but was told that he could not have it. Phillips talked about the impropriety of employing counsel, and then refusing to act by his advice; so that the young man, for want of experience, was absolutely persecuted into the plea of Guilty, and now grieves about it, avows his disgrace, and pledges himself to redeem it the day he is liberated, if further prosecutions be then carrying on. Christopher is a native of Liverpool, has been positively, as Mr. French has said in other cases, been made a Deist by the Unitarians, as he never saw any Deistical books until he got into my shop. I clearly see, that the less we have to do with lawyers, as they are at present, the less we shall be disgraced. Eventually, to injure us, they cannot. There is not a public character, bold and honest enough to give us assistance upon the ground of discussion that we take, so we'll have no more of their bad advocacy.

William Cockrane, of Manchester, who stood his trial fairly, and had Mr. French, *not to defend him*, but to address the Jury, feels disgraced to think, that the Recorder has not given him two or three years' imprisonment, instead of six months, as well as to his companions. I am assured that he frets about it, and feels himself lessened in the public eye. But I can answer for the worth of the man. He volunteered near three years ago, and came forward manfully, the moment he was encouraged. Mr. French's observations about his not being able to read were wholly erroneous and unwarranted. He can read and write as well as I can; and has been a reader of every useful publication published of late, that he could command. He had not confidence enough for want of practice, to defend himself extemporaneously, and

thus Mr. F. was desired to defend him. What was said about frantic poverty was also unwarranted.

TRIAL OF RICHARD HASSELL.

RICHARD HASSELL was arrested on Thursday, May 27, and on Friday, the 28, was taken before Alderman Ansley, at the Guildhall, and charged with publishing a blasphemous libel. On being placed at the bar, the prisoner was asked his name, which he declined giving; but the Alderman had by some means obtained information that his surname was Hassell, which the prisoner did not deny; he still, however, declined giving his Christian name, observing with a sneer, "it may be I never was Christened."

George Leadbeater being sworn, stated, that he went to the shop, 84, Fleet Street, saw the prisoner at the bar and another person in the shop: asked for Paine's "Age of Reason," it was handed to him by the prisoner, the other person took the money.

Alderman (to the prisoner)—Have you any questions to ask the witness?

Hassell (to witness)—You are certain I gave you the book?

Witness—Yes.

Hassell—Are you equally certain that you did not give me the money?

Witness—I am.

Hassell (to the Alderman)—Who is my prosecutor?

Alderman—The Solicitor for the Treasury.

Hassell—Is he here?

Alderman—No: but here is a gentleman attending on his behalf.

Litchfield, a Clerk in the Treasury Office, was now pointed out to the prisoner as the person acting for the prosecution.

Hassell (to Litchfield)—Have you read the "Age of Reason"?

Litchfield—I have.

Hassell—Do you consider it contains a blasphemous libel?

Litchfield—I do.

Hassell—I should thank you to shew me the part you consider as such.

The Alderman took up the “Age of Reason,” and after reading a passage, asked Litchfield if he considered that to be a blasphemous libel?

Litchfield—I do.

Hassell—Blasphemy is a word often made use of, but very little understood (addressing himself to Litchfield); what ideas have you attached to the word blasphemy?

Litchfield looked confused and did not answer.

Hassell (to the Alderman)—I do not wish to force the question—I find the gentleman knows nothing about it—I will pass it over; but I wish to make a few observations—

Alderman—I cannot allow it—this is not the place to argue—the sale of the book is proved against you, I must commit you to find bail to appear at the next Sessions, yourself in £100. and two sureties in £50. each.

Hassell—Allow me to make a few observations.

Alderman—I will allow no such thing, you have sold the book and must find bail.

The Sessions being so near, Hassell did not attempt to find bail.

Monday, June 7, Richard Hassell was arraigned at the bar of the New Sessions House, Old Bailey, and after hearing the indictment read, pleaded Not Guilty.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 9.

The Court was again crowded this day by persons who wished to hear the trials of Mr. Carlile's shopmen.

At ten o'clock Richard Hassell and Michael John O'Connor were put to the bar. On the Jury appearing in the box, one of the defendants addressed the Court.

Recorder—What says the defendant?

Hassell—Are either of the gentlemen on this Jury the same persons who were on yesterday's Jury?

Mr. Shelton—Yes, they are.

Hassell—Then I object to them.

Recorder—You have suffered the Jury to be sworn, and the time has gone by for you to challenge.

Hassell—It will be no trial at all, if the same persons sit on this Jury who already have given an opinion upon the publication.

Mr. French, the Counsel on the part of O'Connor, said he objected only to four of the Jurors.

Mr. Bolland said, that the prisoners might say, after the

trial, that justice had not been done them, if any of the same gentlemen sat on this Jury, who sat on the former trials, and therefore the Jurors, now sworn, had better be discharged.

The Recorder perfectly agreed with the observations of the learned gentleman.

The Clerk of the Arraignment then called another Jury, and as each came to the book to be sworn, the prisoner Hassell asked them if they had served upon a Jury for the trial of a seditious or blasphemous libel? They replied they had not, and were sworn.

Mr. Bolland said, the defendants were indicted for publishing a blasphemous libel in a book called Paine's "Age of Reason," vilifying the Scriptures and the Christian religion. He then cited the following passages:—

"Ah reader, put thy trust in thy Creator and thou wilt be safe, but if thou trustest in the book called the Scriptures, thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood. Those repeated forgeries and falsifications created a well founded suspicion that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ, are made cases on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of these cases, and that so far from his being the son of God, he did not exist even as a man, that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were."

"They tell us that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven; it is very easy to say so, a great lie is as easily told as a little one; but if he had done so, those would have been the only circumstances respecting him that would have differed from the common lot of man, and consequently the only case that would apply exclusively to him as a prophecy, would be some passage in the Old Testament that foretold such things of him; but there is not a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person who, after being crucified, dead, and buried, should rise from the dead and ascend into heaven.—Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence the Old Testament guards upon such things, by telling us of passages they call prophecies, and that falsely so, about Joseph's dream, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff."

"I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of his power and wisdom, in the structure of the universe, and

by which every thing ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means, slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed; and, therefore, the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit. The priests of the present day profess to believe it; they gain their living by it; and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is—he that believes in the story of Christ, is an infidel to God.”

The learned Counsel concluded his address, by urging the Jury to do their duty, and suppress the publication of such dangerous works, by finding the defendants guilty.

George Leadbeater sworn. I am a Bow Street Patrol. I know 84, Fleet Street, the name of R. Carlile is on the door. I went to the shop about one o'clock on the 11th of May last. I saw Hassell, and inquired for the Republican.

Mr. Barnard—Say nothing about that. Did you inquire for the “Age of Reason?”—I asked Hassell for the Age of Reason, and he said he would not serve it; that he only remained in the shop to keep it open, as a man had been taken out, and he would not sell the Age of Reason; but if I would come about three o'clock, a person would be there who would sell any thing. I went at three o'clock, and saw O'Connor and Hassell in the shop. I said to Hassell, “Can I have it now?” He said “What?” I said the Age of Reason. Connor stood within a yard of Hassell at this time. When I said, “Can I have Paine's Age of Reason?” Hassell turned round to a heap of books, and brought me two, one bound, and one in boards; he said the one bound was 8s., and the unbound one was 4s. I said I would take the 4s. book; I took out the money, and Hassell pointed to O'Connor, and told me to give the money to him; I paid O'Connor the 4s.

Mr. French cross-examined the witness, who persisted that Hassell supplied the book, and O'Connor received the money.

Recorder—Would you ask any question, defendants?

Hassell—I must assert, that, however far I am implicated, O'Connor had no participation in the transaction.

Recorder—Ask some question.

Hassell—Was O'Connor serving in the shop, and did he appear to belong to it?—Leadbeater: I thought so.

Hassell—Was he not reading outside the counter?—Leadbeater: He was not.

Hassell—Who sent you to buy the book?—Leadbeater: The Solicitor to the Treasury.

The libel was then read and compared with the indictment.

Mr. French, the Counsel for O'Conner, addressed the Jury as follows:—Gentlemen, upon this occasion I shall be as sparing, both of your time and patience, as I possibly can, consistently with my duty to my client. It was my misfortune yesterday, Gentlemen, to address myself to a Jury that seemed studiously to avert its ear from every argument that I was attempting to enforce, and yet I am persuaded had they treasured up in their memories, after first opening their understandings, the few observations I made to them, they would, at least, have taken one single minute to deliberate upon their verdict, instead of pronouncing it with such an indecent precipitance. But, Gentlemen, I flatter myself that I am not this day at such an immeasurable distance from the possibility of making myself understood as I was yesterday. The very looks of those sage Gentlemen, to whose understandings I was endeavouring to speak, by the intervention of plain words and unsophisticated arguments, convinced me in a moment, to my utter confusion, that they reposed with the most implicit confidence on the wisdom of the Solicitor of the Treasury, and entertained a very contemptible opinion of whatever I had the honour of presenting to their notice. On the present occasion I feel very different; there is something within me tells me that I have met with intelligence, and consequently with persons of enlarged minds, pre-disposed rather to acquit than condemn. I allude to yesterday, because I deem it impossible to take my stand this day upon firmer argumentative ground than that upon which I then rested. I do then, Gentlemen, contend, that it is highly iniquitous to prosecute for blasphemy of an inferior kind, whilst Unitarianism, which the statutes call a damnable blasphemy, is daily, and in every part of the kingdom, polluting all the blessed fountains of Christianity with poison of the deadliest nature. I do contend most strenuously, that the vulgar abuse against every thing sacred contained in the work now under prosecution, is, with regard to Unitarianism, as comparatively harmless in the sight of God and man, as the bold declamation and invective of a Paul before his conversion, when contrasted with the traitorously envenomed kiss of a Judas. Gentlemen, is Unitarianism

rianism blasphemy against the Christian religion or is it not? Let me not be told, that in this free country men may think for themselves as to the doctrine, whether the Saviour of the world be a God incarnate, or merely human; the injustice is, that what they blasphemously think, they blasphemously dare to preach—the injustice is, that they are permitted to allure the youth of this country from the life-giving pastures of the true God into the regions of darkness and horror, crushing all the blossoms of our faith, extinguishing the light of heaven, not whispering in the closets, but proclaiming aloud upon the house tops by a trumpet given to them by the Father of Lies, that adoration of the Saviour of mankind is a defilement of the conscience, a degradation to the understanding, and a reproach to sense and intellect. Gentlemen, a lasting and indelible reproach to the sense of this country it is, to permit the Unitarians to sap the fundamentals of its religion, and to become the laughing stock of the world, by idly wreaking the vengeance of the law against a few unlettered blasphemers, that know not what they do; that never were enabled by education to discover or admire the loveliness of Christianity, to taste its sweets, or to comprehend the solidity of arguments by which the champions of its creed defend it with an easy triumph against the attacks of the infidel. He called upon the Jury to acquit his client, because he was not the vender of the work, and was not an admirer of the doctrines of Paine, but a believer in the Christian faith, and a worthy member of the established church.

The Recorder now called upon Hassell for his defence; he then said—

Gentlemen of the Jury—Conscious of the purity of the motives which led me to publish that which is now charged as being done with a malicious intention, I stand before you with all that confidence with which an innocent man can meet persecution—a confidence which every man, who, like me, is assured of the correctness of his principles, and the purity of his motives, cannot fail to feel. And although I stand before you to defend myself against the combined efforts of priestcraft and power, regardless of what may be the result, I do it with pleasure—I do it with all that inward satisfaction which a man is capable of feeling, while conscious that he is doing, and has done, that and that only which it was his duty to do. The idea of being deprived for a time of liberty in a cause like this, has no terrors; for the mind can support itself with fortitude, while it has the consolation of knowing it suffers for well doing, and supported by the

cheering rays of hope, it smiles under present misfortunes, while it looks forward to the day when the purity of its intentions shall be duly appreciated and rewarded. It is the first and most important duty of man as a member of civilized society, to cultivate and improve his mind—to obtain the greatest possible share of knowledge, and then to impart that knowledge, not only to those who are eagerly seeking it, but to put it in the way of every individual whom he thinks it may concern. This, Gentlemen, is the line of duty laid down by many very eminent and very learned men—in short, by every man who has had the welfare of his fellow creatures at heart. And that I have strictly followed this line of duty, I am confident I shall be able to make fully appear. From the time I first began to think for myself, I have always had a strong desire to investigate the foundation of every opinion which I heard preached to the world. Amongst these, religion took my particular attention, it being preached to us, as that which should occupy our attention during the principal part of our lives. Religion is by some thought to be a question of a very abstruse nature, and not to be decided on by a man of my age. But widely different is the case. Religion, if examined with an unprejudiced mind, examined on both sides of the question with a desire of obtaining a knowledge of the truth, is easy and comprehensible even to the most simple inquirer. The question is only abstruse to those whose ignorance and superstitious notions have so darkened their understandings, that their reasoning powers are not capable of comprehending it; but to me, I can assure you, the question has been easy, and in my mind settled without difficulty. Convinced of the falsehood of all and every religion, I found no inducement to subscribe to any of their creeds. I saw the utter uselessness of them for every purpose of mankind; I found that morality needed not the forms or ceremonies of religion; I found every bad principle weakened, and every good principle strengthened by a total separation from its dogmatical doctrines; in short, I found that to be a good man it was not necessary to be a religious man; and finding the good effects it had on myself, I could not but wish, indeed, I was in duty bound to do all that was in my power to lead others in the same road, that others like me may feel the beneficial effects of being clearly rid of all superstitious notions—effects not only felt by the individual, but seen and felt by all those with whom he may have any connection. This, Gentlemen, is not the mere effusion of an over-heated imagination; it is what I have de-

duced from repeated experience. I have had the pleasure of bringing many to my own way of thinking, and in every instance they have become better men, in every respect better and more useful members of society. These, Gentlemen, were the motives which induced me to become an open and strenuous supporter of the opinions and principles of Mr. Carlile, his opinions and principles being congenial to my own; and when I saw attempts made to suppress those principles which I considered so essential to the happiness and welfare of my fellow men, I ventured *all* I had to venture in their support; which cannot fail to convince you, however much you may consider me to be in error, that so far from having had a malicious intention, I have acted from the most pure and disinterested motives; and convinced of this, you cannot, with justice either to the oath you have taken, or to your feelings as men, find me guilty. I am charged with being a malicious and evil disposed person, so that even if the work which I have published could be proved to be a malicious libel, except my prosecutors could prove the malicious and evil intention on my part, as I said before, you cannot with justice find me guilty. Although this explanation of my motives may warrant my expecting from you an acquittal, still I cannot pass by the other part of the charge, viz. publishing an impious, blasphemous, and profane libel. The publication I am proud to own, but the impiety, the evil attending such an act, I am prepared to question. The Age of Reason, the work in question, I have had an opportunity of placing in the hands of many, of both sexes, of different ages, tempers, and dispositions, and wherever the reading has occasioned in them the least difference, it has invariably been for the best; they have obtained a real benefit, a real good, without the least intermixture of evil; and I boldly assert, confident that no one can disprove it, that the Age of Reason never made a good man bad, while at the same time it has made thousands of bad men good, and useful members of society: whereas, to prove it an impious, blasphemous and profane libel (epithets which, if they have any meaning attached to them, can only mean injurious), it should be proved that *it has been injurious*, that it *has* injured persons or property. I say that it should be proved that it *has been* injurious, because it is not the first copy, or the first edition of a work for which I am prosecuted: thousands of copies have been sold, thousands of converts have been made to its doctrine, and yet not an instance has been proved of its ever doing an injury, which can alone prove

its evil tendency, and constitute it a libel. Was *The Age of Reason* a work of to-day, you might naturally conceive a right to inquire into its merits, to see what it was *calculated to effect* on the minds of men. But the case is widely different. *The Age of Reason* has gone forth to the world, and wherever we trace its steps, we find the beneficial effects which its benevolent doctrine is so admirably calculated to produce. How unjust then is this prosecution, or, I ought rather to say, persecution; for persecution it certainly is to attempt to punish a man for doing that which his conscience assures him is his duty; that which he is assured has been, and will continue to be beneficial to his fellow men; and that which his persecutors cannot prove to have produced one spark of evil. The principal feature in our doctrine is mutual instruction. How unjust then it is to attempt to deprive us of the means—the only means of doing it, the printing-press and medium of publication. We do not force our publication on any one; we only desire free liberty to speak, print, and publish our opinions—liberty to speak to all those who will hear—to publish for all those who will read. It is not merely the rights of an individual which, by those prosecutions, are invaded; it is the rights of a body of men, not so numerous as some others, I allow, but as respectable, moral, intelligent, and useful a body of men, as the nation can produce. To judge rightly of our case, Gentlemen, you should place yourselves in our situation. Of whatever opinion you may happen to be, would you think it right to be deprived of the liberty of speaking and publishing those opinions? Place yourselves in our situation—see and hear the supporters of every other sect endeavouring, by every means in their power, to bring us, our opinions, and our principles into disrepute; and the strong arm of power attempting, through your verdict, to prevent us from meeting them on equal grounds; in short, to prevent us from enjoying those privileges and rights which every other party enjoys unmolested; consider yourselves thus situated, and “do as you would be done unto,” and, by your verdict, prove to the country at large, that while you are enjoying the peaceable possession of your own opinions, you have the liberality to allow that peaceable possession to your fellow men. But thus argue our opponents; “you go beyond the bounds of moderation in your discussions; not content with supporting your own opinions, you attempt to expose, you attempt to bring into ridicule, the opinions of every other set of men.” But I

would ask by what means are we to support our opinions, but by shewing the reasons why we dissent from that of others? We do not believe in either Judaism, Christianity, or Mahometanism, and we are ever ready and willing to give reasons for *why* we do not believe; and I would ask again, by what means are we to do this but by shewing to the inquirer what we consider to be unworthy of belief among the tenets and doctrines of our opponents? for you must observe, that we do not bring forward any thing *new* to be believed in; we only state our disbelief, *and reasons for disbelieving*, what has been handed down to us by our ignorant ancestors. Ignorant I say, and ignorant surely they were when they could talk about the ends and corners of the Earth; about the *Heaven* above, the *Earth* beneath, and the *Waters* under the earth—about the *Sun* standing still upon a *Hill*, and the *Moon* in a *Valley*; with many other things EQUALLY true and wonderful. Surely we, in these enlightened days, cannot be blamed for disbelieving the writings of men so palpably ignorant. But as many ignorant men, even in these days, do believe those writings—at least pretend to believe—and attempt to make others like themselves, either *ignorant believers* or *hypocritical knaves*, is it surprising that *we* should attempt to show good and substantial reasons for *not* believing them? And what has the author of “*The Age of Reason*” done, more than this? In the first page of his work, after stating his own belief, he says; “But lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to those, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my many *reasons* for not believing them;” and to this text I believe he has strictly confined himself. Allowing then, Gentlemen, as you certainly must, that we find many difficulties in the way of believing, will they be removed by prosecuting us? Certainly they will not. If our reasons are not well grounded, why does not some one, competent to the task, step forward and make it so appear? Surely among the seventy thousand *Gospel Preachers* which this country is supposed to contain, if we are in error, one may be found willing and able to set us right! We are ever ready to read what they have to write, we are ever ready to hear what they have to say; and we only claim in both cases the right of replying, till we have elucidated the truth or falsehood of the matter in question. If our reasons for not believing *are well grounded*, is it just that we should be punished for stating them? I answer, No; and *Justice, Truth, and Liberty*, will bear

me out in the assertion. But, Gentlemen, supposing that a person could stand up before you, and prove the opinions and principles I hold to be false, and of an evil tendency; which I can, with safety as to the result, challenge every living person to do, would justice demand that I should be punished?—Far from it. Opinion is not within our controul—it is forced upon us by circumstances, and retained whether we will or no, till more powerful circumstances may happen to force a different opinion in its place. Sound and reasonable arguments may effect this, but, Gentlemen, let me again repeat, what I am persuaded you cannot but acknowledge to be a fact—that prosecution or persecution for matters of opinion, will never cause the prosecuted person to think otherwise; but, on the contrary, will fix the belief in the truth of his opinions more firmly upon him. Of what use is it, then, to prosecute? Has the sale of these works been stayed by the numerous prosecutions which have taken place for publishing them? Has the sale not increased in a tenfold degree with every new prosecution? How vain, then, is the attempt of men in power to regulate the mind, and form it to their purpose? How vain is the attempt of the supporters of the allowed creeds to force their dogmatical doctrines and beliefs on the honest inquirer after truth? How vain their united efforts to extinguish the rising spirit of liberty and free discussion? How vainly do they attempt to transform the child of nature, and prevent the emanation of his mind from going forth to his fellow-man? Take these things, then, Gentlemen, into your consideration—see the uselessness, the gross injustice, and the glaring impolicy of attempting to punish for matters of opinion, and by your verdict put a stop to this system of persecution for what a man cannot avoid. You may, perhaps, consider that the many convictions which have taken place on similar charges form a precedent sufficiently strong to authorize your bringing a verdict of Guilty in the present instance; but allow me to plead the counter precedent. This is not the first instance in which a Court of Justice has been obliged to stop a course of error, and alter its course as well as legislation, for what is called blasphemy there has been legislation upon the word *witchcraft*, and by far more statute laws have been made upon the latter, than upon the former word. But after ages of error, after finding it said in the Bible (Exodus, xxii. 18), “Ye shall not suffer a *witch* to live,” the knowledge of the present age has discovered that no such supernatural powers, as have been attributed to the

word witchcraft, have ever existed among mankind; and within the last few years, the British Parliament has been occupied in repealing statutes about *witchcraft*, which statutes had no foundation but in human ignorance, and must have been null and void from their origin, though many innocent persons, upon false accusation, have suffered from them. It is human innocence that has always suffered most from human ignorance. So in my case it is now quite as clear, that no such an offence as commonly passes under the name of blasphemy, could ever have been committed, as that no such an offence as has often, and for centuries urged under the name of witchcraft, could have been committed. The defect of evidence is the same in both cases, equally with the charge of blasphemy as with the charge of witchcraft. It is our ignorance of natural powers that leads us to suppose the existence of supernatural powers; and unless supernatural powers can be proved to exist, neither the offence of witchcraft, nor of blasphemy can be proved to have existed. This, Gentleman, I should think must sufficiently convince you, not only that I have not committed the offence with which I am charged, but that no man ever did or can commit such an offence; and this part of the charge being dismissed, the prosecution must fall to the ground; for under what other shape can it be supported? It may be said, "but here is the book, and the sale of the book sworn to." That does not affect my argument. In that book, something false must be proved to constitute my publication or sale of it, an offence against law. But it is not, because it contains falsehood, but because it contains truths which go to overthrow falsehood, that I am sought to be punished as a criminal. It is charged that my book speaks improperly of Jesus Christ. These words *Jesus Christ*, are not the name of a person; they are titular words; and in plain English express the words *Saviour Anointed*. The first is an Asiatic word, corrupted from Isse, Jesse, or Jesu, and was the common cognomen of celebrated warriors, as significant of the words *Saviour, Defender, Protector, or Liberator*. The second is an abbreviation of the Greek word, *Christos*, and signifies *anointed*, or a person celebrated for some acts, adopted or anointed by a certain body of people, as their chief, leader, or protector. The words never were the name of any particular person known by no other name. The history of Jerusalem knows nothing of such a person; and it was a hundred years after the alleged origin of Christianity, before the name was adopted as the name of a distinct person; therefore, before my

publication can be charged to be blasphemous towards a person, it falls on the accuser to prove that *Jesus Christ* are words which formed the name of a person known to have existed under such a name; and then, why such words or person are not now to be commented upon, and what they or he has to do with English law; and lastly, whether it be possible to speak evil of or to blaspheme a person alleged to have existed 1800 years ago, and as many miles distant from our country and laws. I exempt myself from all charge of blasphemy towards such a person as Jesus Christ, by saying that I have no knowledge of such person having existed, and that the history of the country in which it is now said that such a person did live, has no mention of such a person. A history of an individual never absent from one country must be inseparable from the history of that country. Gentlemen, I am well aware that by thus acting the part of an honest man, boldly asserting and defending my opinions and principles, that I am drawing forth against me strong and deeply rooted prejudices. But surely I should have been by far more deserving of punishment if I had stood up in this Court, as I might have done, and covered my defence under the mask of hypocrisy? Surely the man who speaks what he thinks, the whole of what he thinks, and nothing but what he thinks, is not so dangerous a character as he who, with hypocritical cant, assures you one thing, and at the same time means another? Throw aside, then, Gentlemen, those prejudices which an open avowal of opposite opinions may arouse in your minds; considering that though we differ, our opinions are equally the effect of circumstances beyond our power to controul. I am likewise well aware of the power which the learning and eloquence of those whom the gold of my prosecutors has brought into Court against me, may have in directing your verdict.

But, Gentlemen, let me beg you to remember that it is not in the power of the most eloquent speaker to alter the truth of the matter in debate. Flowing language, distinct reasoning, and an affected assurance, may mislead the hearer, but it cannot make truth falsehood, or falsehood truth.

Gentlemen, you have heard a few extracts read from *The Age of Reason*, I will now read you a few others; as you can have but little knowledge of the work itself from a few partially selected passages.

Here the defendant read passages from the work in question*.

* During which the Recorder stopped him twice, and asked him, if he

I have now, Gentlemen, gone through the principal part of the work for which I am prosecuted, and I now appeal to your own impartial judgment, to say whether the author has written one immoral sentence beyond the extract taken from the Bible. On the contrary, you must observe, that throughout the whole of his work, the author has endeavoured to inculcate a pure and simple system of morality. "But he has ridiculed the Christian religion," say our opponents, it is true: and what doth this prove but that the Bible is of itself ridiculous? Wit is used in vain if there be not something ridiculous to work upon; and if people choose to believe in a ridiculous book, how can they expect but that it will be held up in its true colours? "He has called the Bible a book of lies!" He has, and rightly too. Who can read two sentences diametrically opposed to each other, and say there is not a lie in the case? And who will say after reading the "Age of Reason," and tracing the references to the Bible, that it does not contain many and glaring instances of this? "Contradictions," as numerous as the chapters, and "absurdities" an ample store are here likewise to be found in confirmation of what my author has written.—If then the Bible be that sort of book which the "Age of Reason" describes it to be, should we not rather be commended than punished for exposing it? If the Bible be true, will our writing make it false? If false, can any power make it true? Doth truth require the aid of man, or falsehood deserve it? See, then, Gentlemen, the dilemma in which this Court is now placed? It is either occupied in the needless work of stretching the arm of power to aid truth, or unjustly attempting to suppress truth and support falsehood. But my opponents say, that we are not here to try the truth or falsehood of religion, but whether I have, or have not committed an offence against law—be it so. If the charge is for libel, how is it substantiated? Have my prosecutors proved an injury done by my publication? Is it possible that one book can injure another? If my book lessens the public esteem for the Bible, is it not a proof that that esteem was ill

thought such a line of conduct could be of any service to him. If he intended to read the whole book, and thus uselessly take up the time of the Court, he would not prevent him. It would certainly not be doing himself any good, but that was for himself to consider.

Defendant—I think it right to read to the Jury more of this book than the mere partial passages which are given in the indictment. I wish to do so, in order to show the Jury the true tenour of the work.

founded? If the "Age of Reason" was an attack on an individual, who could stand up before you and prove that attack to be false and malicious? Then, and not till then, can you with justice convict me of libel. If the charge be for blasphemy, allowing that such an offence could be committed (which I have clearly proved cannot), this Court hath no power to try it. I found my objection in the following clause, in the reports of law, Coke's fifth volume, in the celebrated case of Caubrey:—"So in causes ecclesiastical and spiritual, as namely, *blasphemy*, apostacy from Christianity, heresies, schisms, &c. and others (the conservance whereof belong *not* to the *Common Laws* of England), the same are to be determined and decided by ecclesiastical judges, according to the King's ecclesiastical laws of this realm: for that as before it appeareth the deciding of matters so many, and of so great importance, are not within the cognisance of the common laws." Yet in spite of this plain case, numerous indictments have been brought against us, numerous convictions have taken place at Common Law. You will naturally ask, on what authority? On what law? I answer, on no law, and on very weak, very questionable authority. You will first observe, that the Common Law, as handed down to us from the Saxons, has no mention of any such cases. The other part of what is called Common Law is composed of the decisions of different Judges and Courts of Law. Now as we cannot allow a man to be infallible, so neither can we allow human laws to be infallible, as these are only the emanations of the human mind, and are good or bad according to the maker or maker's knowledge of right or wrong as regards the case to which the law, or laws are made to apply. Yesterday, from the Learned Judge, I for the first time heard on what authority, on what precedent those prosecutions were carried on at Common Law. The first and foundation of all this is the *ipsi dixit* of Judge Hale, the able, the good, the lenient, the pious, the eminent, the enlightened Judge Hale; this Judge, so profoundly skilled in the Common Law of the land, so enlightened as to believe in witchcraft; so good, so lenient, so pious, as to condemn two old women to be burned at the stake, under the idea of their being witches. And yet, Gentlemen, on the *ipsi dixit* of this same enlightened believer in witchcraft, this same pious burner of old women, is founded the present prosecution. But how weak then is the authority of such a man? If he was in error as to the offence of witchcraft, which he undoubtedly was, may he not be in error also as to the offence

of blasphemy?—Blasphemy, as well as witchcraft, according to their general acceptation are but words, they relate to no person or thing; and consequently are not such as to be within the cognizance of this or any other Court of Law. The learned Judge will no doubt quote to you many other what he calls authorities; but let me again beg you to remember that they are all founded on the precedent handed down from the unenlightened and bigoted Judge Hale. I do not mean to say that he was unenlightened in comparison of the age in which he lived, but unenlightened as regards the present advanced state of knowledge. The most illiterate of the present day are aware that he was in error as regards witchcraft; and the enlightened are equally well aware of his, and all others who believe like him, being in error as regards blasphemy. Seeing, then, Gentlemen, the entire want of proof, either of evil intention, or injury done by the sale of this publication; but on the contrary, that the motive was good, and the publication in every respect calculated to do good; and that neither law nor justice requires that I should be punished; by a verdict of “Not Guilty” put a stop to this system of persecution: a system emanating from ignorance, and supported by bigotry; which, with unlawful stretch of power, and perversion of law, had long, and still attempted, to tyrannize over the mind.

Gentlemen, before I conclude, I must once more request you to consider the uselessness, injustice, and impolicy of these prosecutions, whose authors, while they are with hypocritical cant pretending to support morality, are, at the same time, sapping its very foundations. Consider, likewise, that it is not only me as an individual, who am interested in your decision; neither is it confined merely to the question as to the right of debating on theological subjects, but that, through your verdict, our enemies are aiming a blow at the principal bulwarks of the *liberty* and *happiness* of mankind—the LIBERTY OF THE PRESS, and FREE DISCUSSION.

To you, then, Gentlemen, I now leave my case. If you consider me to have been acting from pure motives, and conscientiously doing that which to me appeared right, against which not the shadow of a proof has been adduced, as you are in duty bound, acquit me. You will then return to your homes with the consciousness of having done unto others as ye would they should do unto you, and accompa-

nied with the thanks and good wishes of thousands of your fellow men; while, on the other hand, by giving an unlawful verdict against the liberty of your fellow-man—by becoming the tools of a corrupt, bigoted, and persecuting faction, your own minds would condemn and torment you; mankind would despise you; and you would sink into oblivion, covered with the curses of millions, of whom it is now in your power to command respect, gratitude, and esteem.

Mr. French called several witnesses to speak to the moral and religious character of O'Conner.

Mr. Wontner, the Governor of Newgate, said he was particularly attentive at Divine Service on Sunday, in the Chapel of the Gaol.

The Recorder summed up, and said the only question the Jury had to decide was this—did the defendants publish the work? they would take the law from him, and he pronounced the work to be a blasphemous, wicked, and most dangerous work. If the Jury had a doubt of O'Conner's guilt, they would give him the benefit of it.

The Jury retired for about a quarter of an hour, and on their return, Acquitted O'Connor, and found Hassell Guilty. The Court sentenced him to two years' imprisonment in Newgate, and to enter into his own recognizance of £100. to keep the peace for life.

Hassell said, "My Lord, I congratulate myself that I have fortitude to bear the infliction of so severe a sentence."

MR. WILLIAM CAMPION.

PARALELL BETWEEN THE CASES OF MR. CAMPION AND ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE.

MR. CAMPION was tried in the New Court, in the Old Bailey, on Tuesday, June 8, 1824, for having published a blasphemous libel.

While Mr. Campion was making his defence he was frequently interrupted by the JUDGE and by *Mr. Alderman CLAUDIUS STEPHEN HUNTER*, and in one of those occasions a Juror, exclaimed, "*Are we to sit here and hear all this, My Lord? I am quite sick of hearing it.*" When the case was ended the Jurors retired for about an hour to con-

sider their verdict, and then the forman said, *Guilty*. Upon this verdict being pronounced *the Judge immediately sentenced Mr. Campion to THREE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT IN NEWGATE**.

The Judge before whom Mr. Campion was tried, was Mr. NEWMAN KNOWLYS, *Recorder of the City of London*.

At the close of Mr. Campion's defence, MR. KNOWLYS summed up the case to the Jury, and after stating the offence the prisoner stood charged with, said, *there could be no doubt of his crime being punishable at common law*, and cited a number of cases from James I. down to the present reign, tried before JUDGES HALE, *Rolfe, Mansfield, Kenyon, Ellenborough, &c.* He particularly adverted to the case of a prisoner tried before JUDGE HALE, for publishing a work, in which he said "Christ was a bastard, and religion was a cheat," and on being convicted, was sentenced to be fined 1,000 marks, thrice to stand in the pillory, and to find sureties for life. He also alluded to the case of Peter Annet, for publishing a work called the "Free Inquirer," who was tried before Lord Mansfield. This work libelled the Bible and the Christian religion, declaring that the books of Moses were forgeries, and the Christian religion an invention and fraud. He was convicted, and sentenced to one month's imprisonment in Newgate, to stand in the pillory at three different places, to be afterwards imprisoned in Newgate for twelve months, and to enter into security for his good behaviour for the term of his natural life. In this case the defendant was seventy years of age, he admitted his guilt, and put in affidavits of mitigation; but the court, although the defendant expressed his sorrow for his offence, (a mode of conduct very different to that displayed by the defendant at the bar) thought proper to inflict a sentence apparently severe, that being the only mode, in the opinion of the Judges, likely to suppress the sale of such diabolical publications. The present defendant was, therefore, mistaken in saying, that he had not offended the law, and that in publishing a libel of that malignant character which had been read to the Jury, he had done no wrong, and ought not to be punished. The Court were determined, as far as in its power lay, to suppress the sale of these publications, which diffused irreligious and diabolical opinions throughout the kingdom—publications not containing fair and candid arguments, but horrid expressions and false assertions, which he would not repeat, but would call the attention of the Jury to one sentence, viz. "that those who believed in the fabulous story of Christ were infidels to God."

* See the whole trial in No. 25.

The following remarks on this extraordinary proceeding, and the closeness of the parallel between the case of MR. CAMPION and that of ST. PAUL the APOSTLE, deserve a careful perusal. A candid examination can hardly be expected from a zealot, but it can scarcely fail to produce a permanent impression on every one not totally blinded by superstition.

The heading of the Chapters from the Acts of the Apostles respecting the proceedings against Paul, are first inserted, to serve as a key to the history.

“ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.”

Chap. xxi. “*Paul cometh to Jerusalem, where he is apprehended and is in great danger, but by the chief captain is rescued and permitted to speak to the people.*”

Chap. xxii. “*Paul declareth how he was converted to the faith, and called to his apostleship. At the very mentioning of the word Gentiles, the people exclaim on him. He would have been scourged, but claiming the privilege of a Roman he escapeth.*”

Chap. xxiii. “*As Paul pleadeth his cause, Annanias commandeth them to smite him.—Is sent before Felix the Governor.*”

Chap. xxiv. “*Paul accused by Tertullus the orator,—answereth for his life and doctrines.*”

Chap. xxxv. “*The Jews accuse Paul before Festus,—he answereth for himself, and appealeth unto Cæsar.*”

These heads of chapters are nearly as applicable to Campion as to Paul, and if Paul was justified so is Campion.

In chap. xxi. Paul, although he knew he should be persecuted, resolved against the advice of his friends to go to Jerusalem.

Verse 13. Paul says to them: “*What mean ye to weep and break my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Paul then went to Jerusalem, as Campion did to London; Paul preached his new doctrine, Campion sold his book.

Verse 27, says, “*When the Jews saw him in the Temple they stirred up the people, and laid hands on him,*”

28. Crying out, men of Israel, help; this is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people and the law of this place; and further, hath brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

30. And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul and drew him out of the temple. And forthwith the doors were shut.

31. *And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief Captain of the band that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.*

32. Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and ran down unto them. And when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul.

33. Then the chief captain came near and took him, and commanded *him* to be *bound with two chains*: and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35. And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers, for the violence of the people.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying, Away with him.

Paul not at all dismayed by the violence of his enemies, demanded permission to speak to the people, which having obtained he proceeded.

Chap. xxii. To condemn the prevailing superstitions, and to maintain his own, for this he was cast into prison, and ordered to be flogged, Paul having said he was a Roman citizen whom it was unlawful to scourge, and the chief captain therefore

30. On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from his bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down and set him before them.

Paul was then brought before the constituted authorities, the RECORDER, the CLAUDIUS STEPHEN HUNTER, and *other such persons of his day*, and was as the law jargon of the present day has it "arraigned."

Chap. xxiii. ver. 1. And Paul earnestly beholding the council, said men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2. And the high priest Anninias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth.

3. Then said Paul unto him, GOD SHALL SMITE THEE, THOU WHITED WALL, for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

Excepting the excellent exclamation of Paul against his *perjured* Judge, Campion's case was precisely the case of Paul; he was to be silenced. What can the accusers, the Judges and the Jurors say to this? Why! what Paul's persecutors said, what all persecutors have ever said,

5. We have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ring-leader of the sect of the Nazarenes.

Paul who preached Jesus Christ, and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, was treated in the same

way by those of his time who disbelieved his doctrines, as they of the present time who believe Paul's doctrines, treat those who disbelieve them; both using the same arguments, both following the same iniquitous and shameful mode of persecution, both calling out, "*pestilent fellows, movers of sedition, among all* (*"Christians"*) *"Jews."* Nearly two thousand years have made no difference in those respects, the prevailing superstitions are as intolerant, as unjust, as cruel—their administrators, and ignorant followers, still as unrelenting, as savage persecutors, as were the semi-barbarous Jews in the days of Paul.

PAUL would not however be silenced, but proceeded to defend himself in open court, against his Judges, and the orator Tertullus, to as little purpose however as CAMPION defended himself against his Judges, KNOWLYS and HUNTER, and against the orator Bolland. Both cases were alike, *Judges, orators, accusers*, equally resolved to oppress their victim, and to extinguish his heresy, the ignorant infatuated people in *Paul's* train, calling for vengeance on his head, the ignorant infatuated Jurors in *Campion's* case, or some of them, calling for vengeance on his head. *Paul* was imprisoned, but his doctrines were not extinguished. *Campion* is imprisoned, but his doctrines are embraced. So far the cases are similar: now mark in what they differ. The barbarous uncultivated horde of Arabs called Jews, had been told by their priests, who were their law-givers, that they were to stone unbelievers. These priests had set up a God, a phantom of their wild imaginations, they had succeeded in persuading the people, that this phantom of theirs had delivered to them certain rules, as laws which were to be strictly observed and kept. Many of these laws were such as were never before nor since propagated by any God, or any law-giver. Infamous as these laws were, proceeding as they did from some of the vilest of mankind, people have yet the folly to attribute them to what they call, a wise, just, and merciful God.

Deuteronomy, chap. xxvii. Directs, that idolators,—“that is, those who have gone and served other Gods,” and shall be convicted thereof by the testimony of two witnesses, shall be immediately put to death by stoning. Ver. 7, says, “The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him (or her) to put him to death and afterwards the hands of all the people.” This was the law of the priesthood to prevent non-conformity. With the same view vengeance was denounced against all those small nations whose lands the Jews expected in the first instance to possess.

Chap. xx. ver. 10, says, When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it.

11. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be *that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee.*

12. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it:

13. And when the LORD thy God hath delivered it unto thine hands, thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword.

14. But the WOMEN, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, *even all the spoil thereof*, shalt thou take unto thyself; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies which the LORD thy God hath given thee.

15. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities *which are very far off from thee*, which are not of the cities of these nations.

16. But of the cities of these people which the LORD thy God doth give thee *for an inheritance*, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*

17. But thou shalt utterly destroy them.

These extracts, although pertinent to the subject here discussed, are by no means the worst samples of the cruel, bloody attributes bestowed by the basest of all nations on the horrid phantom conjured up by their priests to delude mankind. Look again reader at verses 16, and 17,—what a command! “THOU SHALT SAVE NOTHING ALIVE THAT BREATHETH.” No man can seriously reflect on the consequences of this “commandment” of the priests of the “Lord of Hosts” of the God of the Jews, without a thrill of horror*.

The Jews in Paul’s time had been taught to believe, it was the will of God that all unbelievers among themselves should be put to a cruel death, and that the people in all the kingdoms, which their God, they said, had given them for an inheritance, and that was the whole earth, should be disposed of in two ways. Those who were their immediate neighbours, and who were as they concluded, the most likely to lead them away from their own cruel superstition, were to be utterly exterminated, man, woman, and child; ox, sheep, and ass, “*every thing that breatheth.*” All the other nations of the earth were to be subjected to perpetual, hopeless, slavery. This then constitutes the difference between Paul’s time and our time. Then the people were commanded, as they believed by their God, to murder those they called blasphemers.

* If the reader be not satisfied of the character, of the abominable, cruel, and bloody moloch, set up as an object of adoration by the Jewish priesthood, he may read the chapter of curses, Deuteronomy chap. xxvii. ver 28.

mers. Now no Christian pretends to have received any such command, they say, their God has commanded them to do just the contrary, they boast that a submission to injuries, and forbearance in matters of opinion are especially commanded, and yet they act directly contrary to these commands. In Matthew, chap. v. Jesus Christ is represented as saying,

38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

39. But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right-cheek, turn to him the other also.

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee *to go* a mile, go with him twain.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

43. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

44. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you;

45. That you may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

And again, chap. vii.

1. Judge not, that ye be not judged.

2. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye;

4. Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5. Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

The Jews had an excuse for persecuting Paul. They were indeed commanded by their law to prosecute him, and he knew it. But the christians, on the contrary, on their own showing, are commanded not to persecute any man, who may be circumstanced as Paul was. Yet Campion was so circumstanced, and they persecute him.

Paul was not however treated with half so much cruelty by his Jewish and Pagan persecutors as Campion is by his Christian persecutors. Paul was admitted to bail, on his own recognizance, to appear when called for, and continued for

two years to be a "*pestilent fellow, and mover of sedition, and a ring-leader*;" after two years, he was again seized, another conspiracy was formed to murder him, he had another mock trial, was again remanded to prison until his appeal to the Roman Emperor could be heard, and when heard he was dismissed.

Paul had this advantage, which Campion has not, Paul had in the Roman Emperor an unbiassed Judge, the Emperor was neither Jew, nor Nazarene; but a Pagan, he probably cared little about the superstitions of either. Campion has no such unbiassed Judge to appeal to, and he must therefore submit to be accused, judged, and punished by his prejudiced enemies.

Paul was a brave man.

Campion is a brave man.

Paul is believed by all Christians to have had faith in the doctrines he preached.

Campion has evidently a firm belief in the truth and utility of the doctrines he upholds.

Campion's Christian persecutors can say nothing against him, that will not be equally applicable as against Paul.

Campion's Christian persecutors can say nothing in favour of Paul, which will not be equally applicable to Campion.

Paul attacked the superstitions of his day.

Campion has attacked the superstitions of his.

Paul is sainted, worshipped by Catholic Christians, and all but worshipped by Protestant Christians. For the stand he made against superstition, and an undue exercise of power, for his perseverance under punishment, obloquy, and all sorts of difficulties, above all for his manly defence when persecuted, honours are heaped upon him.

Yet in pursuing exactly the same conduct, do those very persons who applaud and worship Paul, condemn Campion to a long continued imprisonment.

Campion's persecutors were much more iniquitous than were Paul's, whom they condemn. Paul's persecutors had the Jewish law in their favour, Campion's persecutors had no law at all. All that the Judge who tried him could say, to vindicate the course he was pursuing, amounted to this, that other Judges had taken the same course. That a Judge named Hale, took upon himself to tell a jury they might convict a man for having published a blasphemous libel, and that they found a verdict according to his direction. That succeeding Judges converted the dictum of Hale into a rule, which being taken advantage of by Crown Lawyers for the

purpose of prosecution, other Judges had applied the name of "*common law*" to these proceedings, and under this spurious law, or no law, had punished, and still continue to punish, whosoever they please, who may, like PAUL, opugn the existing superstition.

This was all the Recorder who tried Campion could say to vindicate the conduct of the Court. Campion having denied there was any law on which he could be tried, the Recorder found himself in a difficulty, he was bound to declare the law, but having no law to declare, he told the Jury a story about what other Judges had done in similar cases, fathering the practice on Judge Hale, and calling it "*common law*," it was quite clear the accused could be punished at "*common law*." Mr. Bentham has denied the existence of "*A common law*;" he says, what is called *common law* is an aggregate without an individual, which is absurd. No, says the Recorder, here is an individual, here is *A law*, *A common law*, manufactured on the bench to suit the occasion, by—JUDGE HALE. Thus, according to the Recorder, any Judge, on any occasion, may make any thing law he pleases, he may at once, as Hale did, supersede the King, Lords, and Commons, and from his seat on the Bench, enact laws, *ex post facto* laws, and punish any man in any way he pleases; for when he enacts the law he enacts the penalty also, which may be a certain punishment, as has been done in some cases, or he may leave the punishment to the discretion or want of discretion of the Judge who may succeed him. But Judge Hale wrote a treatise on Common Law, it commences by defining what *common law* is. "*ALL laws of this kingdom (he says) have some monuments or memorials thereof in writing, yet all of them have not their originals in writing, for some of these laws have obtained their force BY IMMEMORIAL CUSTOM AND USAGE.*"

Again he says. Statute laws are acts of Parliament, while those *laws which are BEYOND the time of memory, compose the common law*. That according to a judicial account and legal signification, *time without memory*, is the time of limitation in a Writ of Right, which, by the statute of Westminster, 1. cap. 38, was settled and reduced to the beginning of the reign of King Richard the First, or *Ex prima Coronatione Richardi Primi*, who began his reign the 6th of July, 1189, and was crowned the 3d of September following: so that *whatsoever was before that time, is before time of memory; and what is since that time is, in a legal sense, said to be, within or since the time of memory.*

This Judge Hale, then, although so peremptorily quoted as an authority for the common law, does most positively show that for the persecution of blasphemous libel, there was not then and cannot be now any *common law*. It is perfectly clear that *before the time of Richard the First there was no law of libel*. No one has or pretended there was such a law. No one pretends to say that there is any statute law on the subject. No law then has made libel a crime, and consequently, no book can be a libel, that is, nothing which any book contains on speculative subjects can be a crime. The Recorder said: *Campion shall be punished for an offence at common law*, and in the same breath he said, there is no *common law*, for according to his own showing, and he is quite correct, there was no such thing as common law on the subject before the time of Judge Hale; Judge Hale has himself shewn this, but Judge Hale, finding no law for his purpose when he wished to punish a man, made a law, or rather made a speech, and punished him without law, and against law. This, says the Recorder, is clearly *common law*, for Judge Hale made it and other Judges since his time administered it. It is on these iniquitous proceedings that men are dragged from their families, immured in prison for long, and in some cases indefinite number of years, fined in sums beyond their means, their goods seized, their houses shut up, and their families turned into the streets. Judge Hale committed iniquity, his iniquitous proceeding has been followed by other unjust Judges since his time, and is still practised by the Judges of the present day, the iniquity of one being held up as the justification of another.

If these proceedings be not as unjust as they are infamous, then no such thing as injustice ever existed on the face of the earth.

Dean Swift has characterized these and similar proceedings in words which ought to be held in remembrance. "It is," he says, "a maxim among lawyers, that what has been done before may be done again, and therefore they take special care to record all the decisions formerly made against common justice, and the general reason of mankind. These, under the name of precedents they produce as authorities to justify the most iniquitous opinions, and the Judges never fail of directing accordingly."

London, June 9, 1824.